

The following writings are the first draft of my thesis. It consists of two main parts.

The first part informs the the reader about my methodology and supports it with examples of my practice and then continues with the story and developments of my graduation project. The story unwraps sequentially and now stops at the current state of the project. That will undergo changes and developments in the following month.

After the reader is familiar with the story of the project, comes the second part of the thesis is the theoretical backbone of the project. It is a reflection on influential texts, theory and works that contextualize the project.

Contetnts:

1. **Introduction** (p.3)
2. **Chapter 1 | Watching and listening to the streets** (p. 4-
 - 2.1. The Unwanted (p.
 - 2.2. The Unnoticed (p.
 - 2.3. The Streets (p.
 - 2.4 Leaveamessage /project and research/ (p.
3. **Chapter 2 | When a voice does not come from your pocket** (p.
 - 3.1. Before and after the telephone (p.
 - 3.2. The drifting voice (p.
 - 3.3. Phatic poetry (p.

INTRODUCTION

The situations I find myself in, become an urgency for my work and research. How to understand an environment as a stranger to it. I find being a stranger both here and in my country. Detached from there even before leaving. And unattached, floating here, surrounded by foreign voices. At the beginning is a bliss not to understand, to have no relationship with meaning. Then after some time the pleasure of being isolated from the production of meaning of the voice , turns into a delicate, permanent discomfort. My curiosity asks if it will be possible to translate this feeling and bring it back to the streets. Maybe this time as something curious and pleasant. This question becomes the reason for my project and research in the past and following months.

For the last months I have been working on initiating a network of voice mailboxes in public space. Boxes mailboxes that allow members of the public to record and distribute audio messages in public space. A network of boxes, that exist in different countries in urban public spaces. They are all connected, so that the last recorded message on any of the boxes will be played back on all of the boxes in the network. As soon as a new recording is made, it becomes the one played on all devices. Thus the boxes facilitate a non-instant, slow dialogue between strangers, travelling an unplanned journey through cityscapes. An exploration of isolation and connectivity in public spaces. I have initiated the creation of a little fragment of contact, a way of briefly connecting in a typically disparate and isolating city. A moment of communication and miscommunication at the same time.

Finding myself in constant flux, transition, on the border of feeling comfortable and anxious, at home but still foreign, I see why I am fascinated by the object voice. Mladen Dolar identifies the voice as a "zone of overlapping, the crossing, the "extimate. It is somewhere between interiority and exteriority. Voices contain a certain public moment in time. Voices enact the social space that is embedded in the every day. The voice is an intersection between personal and social.

CH1

~~~~~ watching and listening to the streets ~~~~~

The following chapter will elaborate on my methodology and its development before and throughout the course and support it with case studies of previous projects, with a focus on my graduation research and project.

In my work, I develop research methods and experiments with various media. Feeling comfortable with, but not excited about using photography and video, I mainly employ them as a sketch tool, making notes, documenting my process. I have moved on from the two dimensional qualities of images, both still and moving. In moving image, apart from its documentary functions, I discovered fascination in the tactility of film (16 mm) and projector and their functionality and limitations together, almost as a separate work from the film content itself. Currently I focus on building tangible works and experimenting with DIY (do-it-yourself) strategies. My interest is in using low-tech, simple, accessible methods in unexpected combinations. Thus creating objects (material or virtual) that reflect my own feeling, experience or anxiety and translate it to the viewer/user. I examine processes of encoding, signification and communication to bring personal moments.

Previously, working in the context of photography as my main tool, I gained considerable observer skills. Being discreet, camouflaged, looking, listening and taking with me.

In my images, I have been dealing with subjects similar to my current interests, mostly observation and isolation of neglected, often banal objects and situations.

THE UNWANTED

During my bachelor study I was working in the studio of a fashion photographer and part of my duties, apart from assisting was sorting and arranging the material. During a single photoshoot, hundreds of images are produced. A lot of the them are considered bad for the purposes of the job. So they get deleted. After some time, I developed a certain liking for these images that were of no use to anyone, so I discreetly started keeping some of them. I felt a need to save them, to preserve an evidence of moments that existed but

were aesthetically considered failures. To me they were much more interesting than the other, commercial clichés. Until the current moment I still did not use or show those images, but that short story I mention, because it became the starting point of a project I did at the time.

It is a series of portrait photoshoots, that I initiated. After the shoots, me and the portrayed subject would go through the material and make a selection. Resulting from that was a number of undesired photographs. Unfortunate for my models, the trash was exactly the material I made my own selection from. My work resulted in a collection of photographs, amplified, manipulated, thus questioning their existence, meaning, ambiguity and value.

Images from the work follow --->



THE UNNOTICED

'**Love is Blind**' is a print project, a book with fragments of Boris Vian's text with the same name (*L'Amour est aveugle*, 1949). The book is illustrated with photographs, where I single out existing, trivial objects, moments and details found in the city to put them in the context of the text giving them an ambiguous yet disruptive state.

Using very simple mechanisms, by turning some photographs sideways, new situations emerge, different from the ones depicted. In the story, a fog has fallen over the earth and nothing is to be seen. It has penetrated everywhere. The depicted objects and moments in the images map the

everywhere. From macro details, to landscapes. The fog has a peculiar effect on people and irregular situations happen. That very fog is the reason for the identical tint of the image, present in every image, like the fog is always present in the story. It bonds the images and keeps them in the same narrative.

Images from the work follow --->



Recently I seem to be shifting to using photography as a tool for documentation, going back to its basic properties. Using it as initial input, a sketch to use later and build on. Is no longer a final presentation medium, but examined and explored later as source of information.

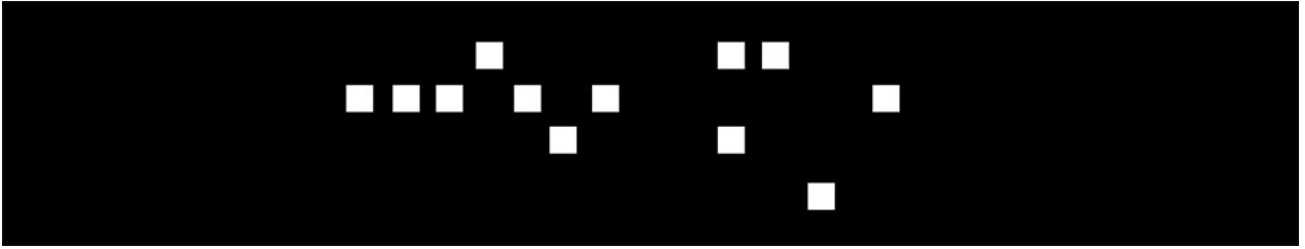
I keep my fascination for short-lived, transient situations and objects, Seeing them, I want to collect them, transform them and bring them back in another form. My focus lays on simplicity and non-evident information layers in our environment, discovering minimal situations in uncommon, contrasting places. In most of my works I look for tangibility executed via diy methods . Setting my attention on self-organized structures that could be translated, disassembled, modified so that the emerging form is my work. This is my role of an observer

that chooses, collects, transforms and makes something new. My methodology is to immerse myself into situations and find in them other ones. I involve myself through looking and listening, with or without passing judgement on the collected impressions. I like to take a break and be slow, catch my breath and look around. In unconscious structures I find unpredictability, unrepeatability, algorithm, randomness, endless combinations and recombinations.

THE STREETS

I find these methods in the projects that started in the first trimester of the course. In message delivery, work from first trimester with Mathaijs van Oosterhout, the focus is on self-driven, chain reaction urban encounters. A very primitive, manual adventure of hand-written notes that travel through the city from person to person and we (the project initiators) serve only as couriers to facilitate, observe and document the randomness of manual interactions. Taking inspiration in the Situationist International practice the *dérive* [literally: "drifting"], we drop our daily activities, to get indulged in a drift through the city, a journey that unlike the original *dérive* is not driven by our own attractions of the terrain but is directed by each person in the chain of messages. One leads to the other, thus shaping our kind of *dérive*. We started a situation and then let the following ones create themselves.

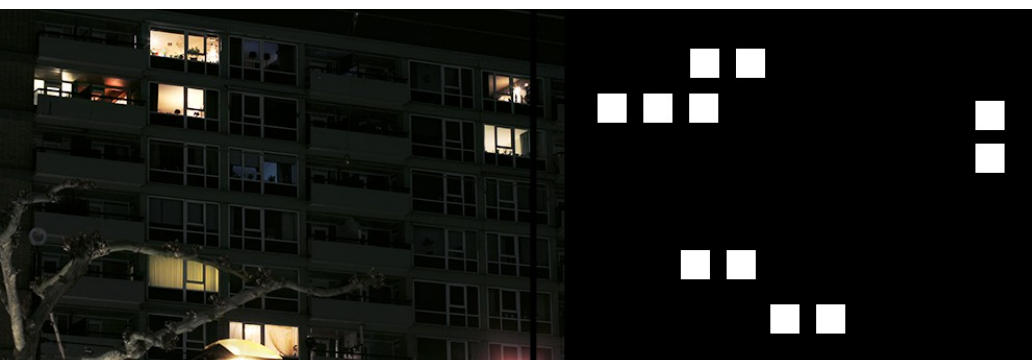
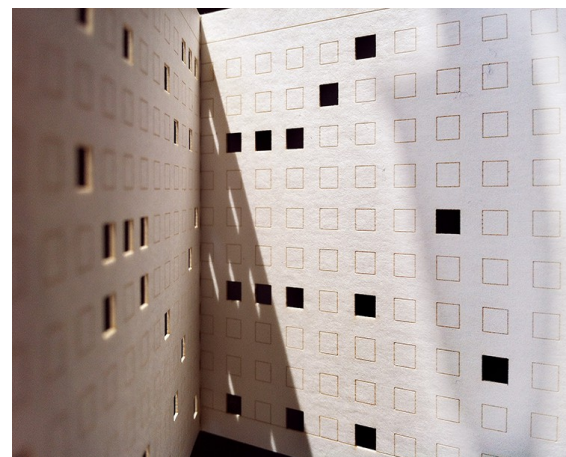




After working on smaller projects, and experimenting with different approaches, my interest toward urban spaces stood out and pointed my next work. The case study is the project '**Street Compositions**'. The project has two parts and they could be seen as independent works, as well as elements of one work. The first part of the work is a custom made music box set. It is a simple automatic, hand-cranked, programmable musical machine that creates sound by the use of a set of pins that pluck the tuned teeth of a steel comb. The programming object is a punch card, having holes to express a program. The mechanism is mounted in a wooden box (cube with 13 cm sides) with a metal crank and two holes for the punch card to go through. It is built to be a simple, low-tech, intuitive, instantly accessible object.

The process of creating the card melodies is closely connected to photographs. I observe the streets at night and take big scale panoramas of the whole length of the streets. After I examine the photos, I take the lit windows of the street buildings and apply them as holes in the punch card. The card, decoded by the music box transforms the chaotic noise of the city into a minimal, analog melody. A mechanical, hand-cranked machine turns people's unconscious collaboration into a personal, poetic moment, rhythmic soundscapes of the streets.

A reason to create a physical object is the transient nature of the information transmitted. The situations that exist at that very moment and are now materialized into paper and continue to exist as code. Transforming scale is curious when using a small, simple device, such as a music box as a decoder. A street fits in a box...in a hand.





The second part of the project aims to bring back the melody to its original environment as an installation in public space. The melody of a specific location is recorded and played through custom made concrete speakers along the same street. This act completes the encoding-decoding process and preserves those transient, insignificant moments. They exist once again in a different form.

Small, quiet and heavy. The music seamlessly loops in the concrete speaker placed on the ground. The melody is subtle and blends with the ambient sound. It is there not to be noticed right away, but rather to be discovered. A discreet poetic presence of a self-organised melody.

The representation of code, created my multiple entities, unaware of each other's contribution. Is the presence of the speaker being noticed, does the sound trigger curiosity and emotion? These are the questions I ask myself, or is it just another entry to the urban noise both audible and visual. Just like the window lights, rendering no special meaning.

The time we spent outside homes and offices, mostly time when we move, go from one space to another, similarly is a transient time, a period of transition, a moment, very interesting to me because of these qualities.

The street as a social and geographical space is merely a routine in every day life, but I believe that an object different from the regular, known elements of the street creates ground for an alternative experience, a poetic click throughout the repeating pattern.

This project is driven by an interest in everyday space /link to psychogeography/. How can everyday routine become present in a different form in everyday life, thus break that same routine in every day life.

The action of turning the lights on, encoded into sound, decoded back into the routine, thus becoming a feedback loop mechanism.





"That which changes our way of seeing the street is more important than that which changes our way of seeing the painting" - Guy Debord (The Situationist City p. 69 Simon Sadler)

LEAVEAMESSAGE

This quote from Guy Debord seems like a good introduction to my current project, process and research surrounding it.

In the following paragraphs I will start with brief What, Why and How of the project. This will be followed by a more elaborate overview of the development of the project as well as influential and contextualising texts and works.

WHAT

LEAVEAMESSAGE is a participative project that attempts to initiate a network of voice mailboxes that allow members of the public to record and distribute audio messages in public space. Each box is a simple device, that has the functions to record and playback audio. It has an interface with only two buttons. One button plays back the last recorded message and the other button allows people to make a new recording. The boxes are connected and synced through the internet, so that the last recorded message on any of the boxes will be played back on all of the boxes in the network. As soon as a new recording is made, it becomes the one played on all devices. All recordings are uploaded on a server and then to a webpage, where the full sequence can be browsed through and listened to. The visitor can see the place, date and time each recording was made. website in development www.leaveamessage.at



one of the boxes

WHY

Because I think it is fascinating how stories and dialogues are formed between strangers in cities through interventions in the public realm. How can different locations become places of entry into a collaborative audio story, a non-instant dialogue, created by acts of strangers.

The boxes provide playful performative moments for passers by to break from routine and enter into a network of anonymous voices, travelling an unplanned journey through cityscapes. An attempt create a drifting sonic dialogue between people in cities. Public space is important, because it is detached from the regulation of online user accounts, profiles and any instant identity. It is a social environment is created by collective anonymity.

The voice is an anonymous aural fingerprint that connects strangers together for a brief moment in time.

I think of the voice chain in public space like throwing a message in a bottle, not an ocean but in a river. The message goes along the flow and reaches a next person that opens it up out of curiosity and has the chance to put his own instead and let the bottle continue the journey.

HOW

The leaveamessage box is a DIY device working with the open source development platform raspberry pi (single-board computer) . It needs only electricity and internet connection (wifi or cable). It can be hosted by anyone, anywhere in the world. Actually it is looking for hosts, people that want to engage a space into this non-instant, anonymous dialogue, distributed through streets, cities, countries. The leaveamessage box can be easily made by anyone that has basic knowledge in electronics.

[[[PROCESS and RESEARCH]]]

-----> First steps

A few months ago, in the framework of my previous projects, I started with curiosity to investigate the possibility of collecting voices in a fragmented way. My interest in such a research came from the idea of initiating a chain of audio messages, left by people in public space. In other words, look at content created within an alternative communication infrastructure. That relates to the chain-like structure of my previous work.

Sound started being part of my work in Street Compositions and thus the transience of the voice, its immateriality, ambiguity and abstractness attracted me. Hearing and discovering sound in public space led me to notice how little we notice the omnipresence of voice in public space. Personally, I discovered the qualities of the voice, only after arriving in the Netherlands, where suddenly voices inhabiting the streets spoke so many different languages. That collaborative cacophony made me distinguish the sound of voice among urban noise, and want to capture its transiency and preserve it. Different languages and communities spoke amongst each other thus one did not really listen or pay much attention to the other. Well for me, as a foreigner, there was no way to hear one or another, simply because to me they were all equally non-understandable.

My urge was to intertwine these voices, to mix them and thus recreate my experience. This mixing, I could see possible if people could voluntarily record themselves.

The prototyping / making, learning, testing

At first, I looked at recording mechanisms and devices that already existed.

Contrast attracts me, as well as unexpected combinations, so the first object that seemed to be what I was looking for was the answering machine. It is an object that inhabits private, rather than public space. Or better to say 'inhabited' since answering machines are more or less obsolete by now.

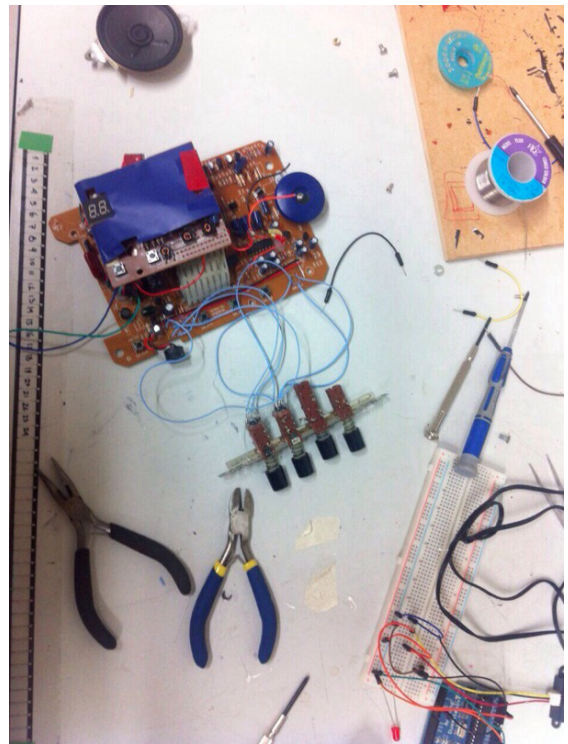
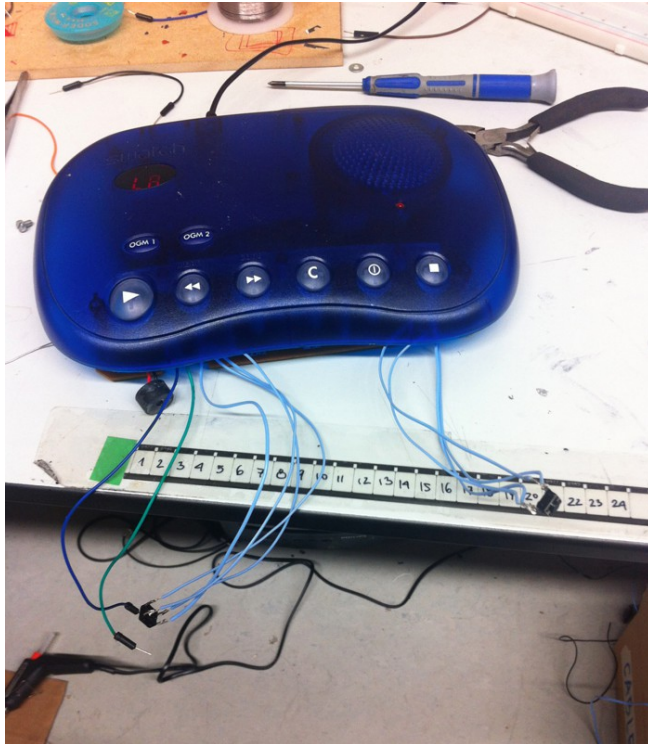
Unlike centralized voicemail...the answering machine is an existing, physical device that must be set up in the user's premises alongside the user's telephone. The first commercially successful answering machine started being sold at the beginning of the 60's in the US but Europe lagged much and it became widespread in the late 1970s. Answering machines were a very popular device for a while and apart from its purely applied functions, it occasionally was a platform for performativity. (example with George's greeting message from Seinfeld, American sitcom) Both in the case of the greeting and the left messages.

That creative ground vanished very soon, since the answering machine got obsolete soon after it entered people's homes, with the appearance of mobile technology. Well, one may argue that the technology still exists in voicemail but I believe that the time when someone called and left a voice message is gone. Exactly that fact, that answering machines are technology that had such a short life, and so soon got neglected, made it very interesting to revisit. It is meant to be a personal object, that is located at home. Callers know who will listen to the message. My use of the answering machine would be an almost complete disposition to what it is originally meant to be. An object, placed in public space, that is no longer a personal one, but a platform for collective use.

For my purposes, I could no longer use the answering machine in its pure functionality, since I did not need a phone connection. There was no fixed recipient, nor caller. The input would come from the places it occupied. I started experimenting with Arduino and answering machines to make an object that is able to attract attention of the passer-by. I modified an answering machine so it becomes responsive to presence and invites the one close to it, to leave a message. Unfortunately, this was not really stable enough to work for long, and served only as an initial experiment to observe interaction and presence of an

untypical to the urban environment object.

some process images



On the other hand I did not want to attach an element of nostalgia to the object, that would inevitably be present with the interaction with a recognisable answering machine.

That led me to future prototyping developments.

My desire was to build my own machine, combining existing technology with my own input. In the last two years I embraced the Do-it-yourself methodology and excitement, both analog and digital. By going the whole way through in making my own apparatus, it becomes a personal, an artist object, a crafted, hand-made tool. One that can be made accordingly to my intentions, one that can be changed and modified according to the project developments. That is why I spent my winter 2014 trying to figure out everything, from electronics and hardware, to the code that makes all this come to life.

After experimenting with redundant media (answering machines) and Arduino, it was obvious that a more stable and complex system was to be assembled. Building the device using a raspberry pi for a brain seemed the most logical way to go. Raspberry pi is a tiny and affordable computer that primarily uses Linux kernel-based operating systems. Working with the Raspberry pi helped me get a better understanding of what is inside the black box that the computer was for me and helped me prototype my own box, a leaveamessage box. A relevant point is that, while going through the building process, I have basically made a device, easy to recreate by anyone who is enthusiastic and knowledgeable enough.

I started with making a sound capturing and playing back device would allow people passing by to record their voice. The recording time was set and limited to ten seconds. Basically with the press of the record button, the light went off and the recording started, after ten seconds it stopped automatically. This limitation was like a score, it created a series of short, almost sample-like audio recordings. The last recorded message is played back aloud every time someone approaches the object. However, this interactive, motion response made the object intrusive, repeating itself even when the passer-by was not interested in it, that became easily annoying. In an urban environment, there is

constant movement, which is stimuli to such mechanism and thus the device starts to creating sound pollution in the space it inhabits and is in danger of becoming annoying.

That was not my intention, on the contrary my desire was that the object is less intrusive, triggers curiosity, has to be discovered. That brought me back to the simplicity of the answering machine. A simple device that plays back and records audio.

So my next prototype became simpler, without a proximity sensor. Only a case with two buttons, and an LED light. One button to listen, and the other to record. Choosing big, arcade buttons, was influenced by a comment on an article about the obsolete, neglected and forgotten media. In the comments, people started discussing what objects they personally miss most. That's where I stumbled upon this post

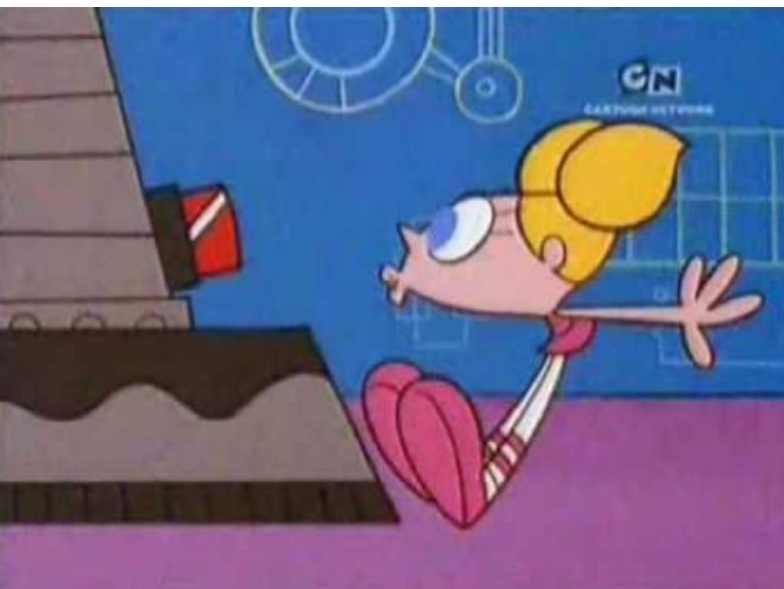


MSI, Captain ▶ Wilson Rothman

10/09/09 4:37pm

Good article. Buttons are what I will really miss. I used to volunteer working in a local tv station. Soooo many buttons. :)

And then a reply to this comment, with a picture from a cartoon from the late '90s (the all-favourite Dexter's Lab) followed by a discussion on the joy of pressing physical buttons and the increasing lack of them in recent devices and interfaces.



The series follows Dexter, a boy genius, as he tries to keep his bumbling sister, Dee Dee, away from his secret laboratory. Somehow able to sneak her way through the lab's hi-tech security system, Dee Dee manages to destroy Dexter's inventions. Mostly by pressing the red button. Dee Dee is Dexter's dim-witted sister, and she is first, attracted by the way the button as an object looks, and then she is as any being curios about what happens after the button is pressed. The unexpected, the unknown, the surprise moment.

That simple, natural urge is what I have taken into account when figuring

out the look and functionality of the device. I count on the universally embedded ideas that buttons are meant to be pressed, they give the user a sense of control and there is always a consequence, hence something happens after the press.

So the final interface of the Leave a message box shaped to being a box with two buttons, and LED light, a speaker and a microphone.

Field Experiments, content, user feedback

Hello is there someone....I wonder what's inside

First official experiment: 13, 14 and 15 of December 2013

Location: Witte de Withstraat 50, 3012 BR Rotterdam, mounted on the facade of TENT, centre for contemporary art

On a nice, cold December morning a yellow, wooden box appeared on the facade of TENT. The first setup of the leave a message box was a prototype, rapidly made with lasercut parts. It was clumsy both technically and visually, but one has to make a start, so there is an actual point to improve.

An open call for Radio Calling event in TENT was a good reason to initiate the project and start exploring interaction in such a central location in Rotterdam. A busy street like Witte de Withstraat. So many different voices passing by.



first tests with Max Dovey and the true joy of hearing your own recorded voice

Together with Max Dovey (a friend performance artist, who is smiling charmingly from the image above this text), we set up the box, and the aim was to use the recordings in the Radio Calling performance/online broadcast. The box had to be taken down every evening, to be safely put inside the building, since it was not secure enough to endure possible assault on behalf of unhappy or under alcohol or drug possession passers-by. That of course deprived the recording archive of the more interesting part of the day, when people are off their duties and in the transit period between work and home and may have let their vocal expression take over the street for ten seconds. The night period remained undepicted as well. In total, the box remained in public for twenty four hours. The recordings grew with the time the box spent on the street, thus the third day there was most interaction. That led me to the observation that an unfamiliar object in public space is often being observed by the dwellers of the region and it takes certain time to get accustomed to. Of course

spontaneous interaction is also present, by people who are curious by nature and perhaps less shy or in a hurry.

Already in this very first experiment for a brief moment of time a taxonomy was visible. There were extremely diverse - from purely pathic (one of Jakobson's six Functions of language, Thomas A. Sebeok, *Style In Language*, Cambridge Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1960, p. 350-377) recordings, performative ones to even empty ones, in a sense that only the space's ambience was present in the audio.

This collection of recordings was visible as a sequence and available for anyone on a webpage, where one could listen to all the recordings, and see all the background information about them (the present metadata: Location, date, hour, second that the record button was pressed).

My further findings and observations I would like to reveal with the experiments that followed, and thus gradually tell the story of the project.

Merry Christmas and Resign!

Second experiment: December 2013

Location: Angel Kanchev street, Sofia, Bulgaria

After Rotterdam my way took direction towards Sofia and I among the important items in my bag was a raspberry pi and a home brew amplifier. The fun started already at the airport, where my luggage attracted more than the regular attention. And as hard as it is for me to admit it, the fact that a girl carried around electronics made things a bit easier, so I embraced it.

In Sofia, roaming the city for a few days resulted in finding a great host location. A hostel, in the middle of the city centre, on a busy but still small, even charming street, with more pedestrians and less cars. The hostel keepers provided their facade, as well as electricity and internet connection.

My intention was to let the box stay there as much as possible while I myself also reside in Bulgaria. That meant it has to be secure enough to survive the night streets in Sofia, as it was rather curious to see what the night time brings, that did not get revealed previously in Rotterdam.

With only a few tools and the raspberry pi at my disposal, I had to employ a real DIY strategy. The present parts were: most importantly the brain and heart - raspberry pi with an sd card with the python code that glued everything together, a big LED and an amplifier for the speaker. Everything else had yet to be discovered. A speaker, ripped of an old radio, a desktop microphone, stripped bare of all the accompanying plastic and found buttons at a local electronics shop. So far for the inside, but what would be the best to wrap this all up in a unitary shape? With no workshop within reach, neither much possible help due to winter holidays, the only option was a big building supplies hyperstore (Baumarkt). After a quick tour one cannot escape but be drawn by one interesting yet rarely purchased for personal use object- the cashbox. Small but strong, it was perfect to endure bulgarian curiosity, therefore become a shell for the hardware. After some hand drilling, the box was painted pink (which was a consequence of a chain of events that left me with no other choice). The meaning of such a color could be decoded ambiguously, since times were not so pink in Bulgaria and there was a lot of political tension, with a strong presence on the streets.



Unlike Rotterdam, Sofia's box triggered more interaction. It was an interesting time, there was a holiday mood, mixed with anger and disappointment from a whole summer of protests against the government in vain. And so it began. A repeated observation, in the fact that it takes certain time for the object to integrate within the space before interaction occurs. As if the object has to be remotely investigated by the passers-by. So they would pass once, twice and the box would still be there. Its persistence, somehow proved respect and then curiosity would take over. After one person approaches, then usually it becomes a chain reaction, and one triggers the other. A very simple mechanism that functions in many layers of our everyday lives.

The box remained on the street for a week and the more time it was there, the more frequent the input became. The content had incredible diversity. From greetings and wishes for happy holidays and better times, to hoots and shouts for the resignation of the government. Beatbox performances, announcements of children's misbehaviour, singing. The more time spent on the street, the box proved to function as a sonic depiction of the street it inhabited. A sound map over a week, collaboratively created by the simple audio contributions of strangers.

Contrary to expectations, the box did not get vandalized, not collected cursing and insults. Night time remained silent. Perhaps the cold winter nights emptied the streets.

When the box had to be unmounted, I received a lot of requests, from random people living close by and especially the people that hosted the box, asking for it to stay. It had become part of the place. And the recordings, like the toys in chocolate eggs, making the passer-by eager to reveal the content, even if there is a chance it may be pleasing. Well, maybe next time it will be.

Once upon a time there was a poem which was hidden and when it came outside it was killed without saying one word...

Third experiment: January-February 2014

Location: Cafe de Bel, Gerard Scholtenstraat 61-B, 3035 SE Rotterdam, the Netherlands

The box spent ten days in a bar, a semi-public space in the North of Rotterdam. Since the presence of the box in a space shaped a sound, or better a voice map, next locations would be other urban dwellings. After the street came the bar. Varying from attempts to make poems, dirty comments to short fiction. When the move the box came, the hosts were not willing to give it away. It was a pleasant object for them, piling up every-day comments, revealing a 'phatic poetry' that is present in a place but rarely registered.



A similar comment that came from all spaces that the box temporarily inhabited. The need to talk to another place, a sort of distributed dialogue with another location. That idea, makes the listen moment more exciting, it includes numerous imaginary places.

A turning point

Listening to the recordings from Cafe de bel was difficult, as they were mainly in dutch. It was confusing and enchanting at the same time. It was the moment that the feeling of estrangement from all the places that I find myself became obvious. Could that discomfort be transformed into an excitement by engaging different locations, different cities, countries? Will such a simple spectacle, taken for granted, possible become exciting when placed in an opposite context to what we are used to? Namely on the street, connecting us to unknown places and its dwellers, rather in our own pocket, connecting us to friends, on their usual routes.

These questions were the reason to start working towards the initiation of a network of connected boxes, facilitating a 'slow dialogue', voices travelling unpredictable routes through various cityscapes.

The functionality of the device had to be changed, so it was modified so each box functions as a node of centralised network. As soon as a recording is made, it could be listened to on any of the boxes, until a new one is made and becomes the one played back on all nodes.

Using my own networks of people I know and places I am somehow connected to, boxes appeared in Sofia, Vienna, Amsterdam. The difficulties to keep a do-it-yourself network function are many. Living in times of plug and play devices and less engagement to public space, installing a physical object, and maintaining it is a rather problematic task. It requires also certain devotion on behalf of the host space. It also requires basic handiness, qualities that should not be underestimated.

Despite all problematic points, the network has made its start and boxes are already installed.

Soon to be expected Athens, Linz, Zagreb and Sao Paulo.

Leave a message box in Amsterdam, hosted by artist-run space W139



recordings emerges from the network topology. When the locations get mixed and one follows the other, the excitement to press the listen button and try to understand, imagine where and who left the message grows.

Leave a message box in Vienna, Museums Quartier, hosted by artist collective monochrom.at



Still to write -----> the slow dialogue -----> my role is to start it, not to make it, that's why I am a facilitator

The DIY network dream -----> is it just a utopia? How much can it grow and how? How long will it last?

CH2

When a voice does not come from your pocket

In the following chapter I will make a brief historical overview of the disconnected voice, before and after the telephone. This chapter will follow how the disembodied voice shifted its meaning and position, from mystical to ubiquitous. I will argue that recently it has started to return to its mystical qualities due to voice calls are not as common as before. This will contextualize and elaborate why it is important for my project to employ the disembodied voice.

I will also outline the connection between voice and space. Why is it important to place the disconnected voice static in public space. How does the voice change its character once it remains (is recorded)? It becomes a document of that place in time. It becomes an object. When voice comes from a specific, fixed place it is the object of a location. One has to be there, and does not carry the opportunity to talk in his own pocket. It is no longer attached to your personal object. The voices and languages inhabiting certain physical areas, create the sonic atmosphere of a place. Contextualized and related to psychogeography and the Situationist International, more specifically the practices of derive that also implied the possibility of chance encounters, meetings with strangers. Here, I will also shortly outline the connection and difference with street art.

The last part will elaborate on how the interaction within the work is a feedback loop and how the interactions fall within Jakobson's six functions of language and the recordings become a form of 'phatic poetry'.

DRAFT NOTES FOLLOW ---->

The displaced voice has always been an ambiguous object. A source of awe but also excitement. Dating back to ancient Greece, where Pythagoras's students could not see him but only hear his voice. The etymology of the word acousmatic comes from the Greek word akousma: what is heard. Pythagoras students were called akousmatikoi (hearers).

From imitating to synthesising the voice

Ventriloquism --> from religion, to witchcraft, to performance and entertainment

Ventriloquism could be traced very early in history but I shall touch upon it as such that appeared in the eighteenth century. This was the period when the practice developed as a performance, a spectacle that was established as such by the late 18th century.

Speaking machines synthesising human voice speech...or is it more correct to say voice

Wolfgang Kempelen's speaking machine.

The sounds of the machine have very little linguistic qualities, but imitate

non-linguistic human voice sounds.

Project related---> Faced with a recording device, sometimes people tend to make sounds that are very much like the one of the speaking machine of Kempelen.

In any of the cases above, the voice is not dispatched completely. The direction is clear. There is a source, whether the ventriloquist dummy or a speaking machine and the voice comes out of there, as if attached on a string. An invisible but relevant string. This metaphor is made real with the appearance of the telephone. The telephone wire is the string. A voice successfully compressed into a wire, a line. Voice that is extended to travel distances. Alexander Graham Bell is credited with inventing the first practical telephone. He was awarded the first US patent for the telephone in 1876. From that moment on, the voice slowly lost its mystical acousmatic qualities. The excitement of the disattached voice slowly faded and it became a trivial event. In the late nineties, mobile telephony became present. Mobile phones liberated the users from the physical environment. The disembodied voice could appear anywhere. It started to be carried in the pocket. Voice infiltrated the environment as people conversed with each other in public space. This dialogue of mobile telephony in public space still remains somewhat disconnected as it is half coherent, with the other half hidden from the passer-by. A public half-dialogue, part of a private conversation. A monologue extracted from a dialogue. Not being able to grasp the whole, leaves a lot of room for guessing and imagination. *Such fragmented representation of a dialogue, distributed in space relates to my project. In most recent times, mobile phones are smart. No longer they serve to only transmit the voice through space. Smart phones are our omnipresent communication tool. In our bag, pocket, hand. Mostly in our hand rather next to our ear. Voice calls are being pushed away by other means of communicating, easier ones, visible rather than audible, giving us a chance to be continuously connected, without disturbing the environment. Voice calls are becoming a sort of an event. A voice call signifies some sort of urgency. It is no longer a casual event. Does this mean that the disembodied voice is slowly winning back its mystique power, its ambiguity?

**Somebody who detains you with his speech was once said to be 'buttonholing', you, recalling the practice of physically crooking a finger in the buttonhole of one's interlocutor. Steven Connor / non literal --> relate to the button of the box*

**The distant voice is also often enclosed, in boxes, suitcases, cupboards, or even underground. When it is thus enclosed, the voice is imagined as coiled upon itself with the kinetic tension of compression. Steven Connor*

Voice is one of the principal 'extensions' of man MacLuhan, Marshall (1964). Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

*The voice as an object that remains. The recorded voice

*Steven Connor about the voice - voice, as an object of hearing, lacks 'permanence and continuity', it 'belongs to time'. How does this relate and

change when it is recorded?

*Sound as a mediator to the environment. Voice as sound in the environment

Sound is intrinsically and unignorablely relational: it emanates, propagates, communicates, vibrates, and agitates; it leaves a body and enters others; it binds and unhinges, harmonizes and traumatizes; it sends the body moving, the mind dreaming, the air oscillating. It seemingly eludes definition, while having profound effect. (LaBelle, 2007)

With the telephonic principle, comes another desire, the desire to preserve, to trap sound, not only to convey it through space. Capturing voice, preserving it and keeping it is part of my project. The recording boxes enclose voice and distribute it to the locations of the other boxes until a new recording is made and takes this place. I believe there is a charged relationship of voice to space and questions of public and private. With the decreasing use of voice calls, voice in public space remains embodied. Perhaps amongst the few examples of disembodied voices in public space are the announcements in public transport. With a small device distributed to various public spaces I try to investigate the situation in which anyone's voice could remain aloud in space without its beholder. Each voice becomes a temporary site-specific sound installation.